



Florida Gov. DeSantis Signs Bill to Block Big Tech Censorship

Florida Republican Governor Ron DeSantis on Monday signed Senate Bill [7072](#), a [law](#) that gives the state the power to penalize social-media companies when they ban political candidates or everyday citizens.

“Today, Floridians are being guaranteed protection against the Silicon Valley power grab on speech, thought and content,” DeSantis [said](#) on Monday at a signing ceremony in Miami. “We the people are standing up to tech totalitarianism.”

Under the legislation, the Florida Election Commission may [fine](#) social-media platforms \$250,000 each day that a candidate for statewide office is removed from the service for more than 14 days. Non-statewide office candidates will carry a \$25,000 per-day fine. In addition to enabling individuals who are censored to seek monetary damages, the legislation allows the state’s attorney general to sue Big Tech companies for unfair and deceptive trade practices.

This new law applies protection not only to elected officials but also to ordinary Floridians, who could win up to \$100,000 in statutory damages. Of course, one of the most prominent people to be de-platformed recently was former President Donald Trump, who was removed from both Facebook and Twitter for “inciting violence,” which Congress later proved he did not do.

DeSantis pointed in particular to Trump being banned by Twitter while the platform still allowed Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to maintain an account while blatantly violating Twitter’s own rules regarding inciting violence and hate speech.

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“When you de-platform the president of the United States but you let Ayatollah Khamenei talk about killing Jews, that is wrong,” DeSantis believes.

“This session, we took action to ensure that ‘We the People’ — real Floridians across the Sunshine State — are guaranteed protection against the Silicon Valley elites,” DeSantis said in a statement. “Many in our state have experienced censorship and other tyrannical behavior first-hand in Cuba and Venezuela. If Big Tech censors enforce rules inconsistently, to discriminate in favor of the dominant Silicon Valley ideology, they will now be held accountable.”

The law will require social-media companies to post terms of service with standards for handling issues



Image of Ron DeSantis: Screenshot from flgov.com



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on May 24, 2021

such as censoring, de-platforming, and blocking users. It will demand that companies apply the standards consistently and give users proper notice of policy changes, as well as issue notices of seven days before an account is banned to give users “a chance to change their behavior and resolve the issue on the platform.”

“If someone in Silicon Valley doesn’t like you, then they can work together and just wipe you off?” DeSantis continued. “That’s people’s livelihoods that are at stake. Those are people’s businesses and ultimately people’s jobs that are at stake.”

DeSantis also noted the legislation was made necessary by an unprecedented concentration of power, which Big Tech has used to enforce left-wing orthodoxy of thought on such issues as the origin of COVID-19 and the efficacy of lockdowns.

With Dr. Anthony Fauci now [saying](#) he is “not convinced” the virus was created naturally, the governor noted that social-media platforms had initially considered the Wuhan lab leak theory a conspiracy theory.

“Even Fauci admits that this may be something that very well is the case,” DeSantis said. “Are they going to now censor Fauci and pull him down off social media?”

In early April, DeSantis held a [health roundtable](#), which was removed from YouTube because the panelists, including highly credentialed medical scientists from across America and beyond, slammed face masks, lockdowns, contact-tracing schemes, and dubious mandates imposed by many other governors and policymakers in response to COVID-19. One of the scientists, who has been subjected to Big-Tech censorship on social media, argued that censoring experts who disagreed with the establishment narrative was dangerous to public health.

DeSantis’s supporters believe that the first-of-its-kind legislature will ensure the protection of the First Amendment-protected rights.

Senator Ray Rodrigues, the Estero Republican who carried the bill, [said](#) lobbyists have killed similar bills in other states but declared that “When it comes to freedom of speech, in this state, we will defend freedom of speech against digital book burners, regardless of how big they are or how powerful they are, because speech is fundamental to our freedom.”

Spring Hill Republican Representative Blaise Ingoglia, the House bill sponsor, called the legislation a consumer-protection measure. “(We) do not think that a handful of kids behind some desks in Silicon Valley get to be the arbiter of what free speech is,” he said.

Some lawmakers, mostly Democrats, but Republicans, [too](#), have questioned whether the measure is constitutional because it would compel companies to host speech. And lawsuits [are expected](#) to follow the signing.

The Florida Senate Democratic Caucus released its own statement, [calling](#) the bill a reaction to Trump’s ban from Facebook and Twitter, and a government overreach.

Chamber of Progress, a trade group that represents technology companies, CEO Adam Kovacevich, has [argued](#) that the legislation will help make online conversations more hateful.

Facebook and Twitter declined to comment on the law. YouTube did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Lawmakers in Texas, Arizona, and North Dakota have also [introduced bills](#) that mandate greater



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transparency regarding content moderation and prevent social-media platforms from canceling conservative speech.



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